



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

Regional Office, R5
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592
(707) 562-8737 Voice
(707) 562-9240 Text (TDD)

File Code: 1570
Appeal No.: 12-05-00-0013-A215
Date: July 26, 2012

Dick Artley
415 NE 2nd Street
Grangeville, ID 83530

CERTIFIED - RETURN
RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Mr. Artley:

The Forest Supervisor for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, J. Sharon Heywood, signed the Record of Decision (ROD) approving Alternative 5 of the Algoma Vegetation Management Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on April 25, 2012. The notice of the decision was published on May 4, 2012. On May 31, 2012, you filed a Notice of Appeal (NOA) pursuant to 36 CFR 215.

I have reviewed the entire appeal record, including your written Notice of Appeal (NOA), the Algoma ROD, FEIS, and the supporting documentation. I have weighed the recommendation from the Appeal Reviewing Officer and incorporated it into this decision. A copy of the Appeal Reviewing Officer's recommendation is enclosed. This letter constitutes my decision on the appeal and on the specific relief requested.

FOREST ACTION BEING APPEALED

The decision authorizes the following activities:

Thinning:

Approximately 4,670 acres of forested stands would be thinned. In general, the thinning prescriptions would retain densities recommended for ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands (outside of sanitation areas) and a stand density index of 250 or lower, with an emphasis on leaving the healthiest dominant and co-dominant trees and removing trees from the smaller size and crown classes. Thinning activities include:

- Thinning in natural stands on approximately 2,490 acres of 50 to 85 year old mixed conifer and ponderosa pine stands to reduce ladder fuels and return stands to desired densities.
- Thinning with sanitation on approximately 930 acres of 75 year old ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands in areas of heavy mortality from blackstain root disease. Healthy areas will be thinned; and dead, dying and infected trees will be removed from areas infected with root disease to break the cycle of re-infection.
- Single tree selection on approximately 180 acres of 50 to 75 year old ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands to reduce stocking, treat ladder fuels and increase forest health



while enhancing stand variability. Trees will be harvested across diameter classes to reduce stand density to a level that allows for improved growth.

- Thinning in approximately 1,070 acres of 25 to 40 year old ponderosa pine plantations to reduce fuels and tree densities.
- Thinning of conifers encroaching on hardwoods. Conifers will be removed within prescribed distances from black oak, aspen, and other hardwoods in the project area.

Small diameter understory trees (4 to 9.9 inches dbh) will be thinned in all units except units 31, 33, 40, and 214. In these units, thinning of 4 to 9.9 inches dbh will not occur except within 300 feet of main roads (and along the back of the plantations that are adjacent to 40N13 and 40N13B in unit 40). The thinning prescriptions for 4 to 9.9 inch dbh trees were modified to retain more vertical structure and/or closer tree spacing for northern spotted owl (NSO) habitat needs in units 32, 42, and 247.

Fuel Treatments:

Approximately 1,300 acres of fuels in thinned stands would be treated mechanically or by prescribed fire in order to reduce fuels and reintroduce fire into the ecosystem. Additionally, a 150-foot Defensible Fuels Management Zone (DFMZ) will be established along units that border roads 40N63Y, 40N13, 40N13B, 40N11, 41N06, 39N06, 39N28Y and portions of Highway 89. The thinning and fuel prescriptions would accomplish the majority of the DFMZ establishment; in addition, all snags within the DFMZ will be removed.

Road Actions:

Road actions are planned to improve and maintain the transportation infrastructure or facilitate LSR restoration activities. Road actions include:

- Road closure to reduce open road density in the LSR to benefit wildlife and protect sensitive features on 21.7 miles (5.3 miles in Riparian Reserves);
- Road decommissioning activities to reduce road density, reduce habitat fragmentation and to restore habitat in Riparian Reserves on 10.2 miles (5.4 miles in Riparian Reserves); and
- Other connected road actions include construction of 1.3 miles of temporary roads and reconstruction of 9.9 miles of roads; general maintenance on 41 miles of roads and adding 4 miles of existing routes to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS).

The decision includes the implementation of resource protection measures described in Chapter 2 of the FEIS that are designed to minimize, reduce, or eliminate impacts to natural and cultural resources.

APPEAL REVIEWING OFFICER'S FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATION

Documentation identified during review of the appeal demonstrated compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies in light of the 4 appeal issues identified in your appeal letter.

The ARO, Susan Skalski, found that the project is an appropriate and reasonable response to direction in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and is in compliance with the plan.

The purpose and need for the project were clear. The Shasta-Trinity Forest Supervisor's decision logic and rationale were clear and well documented in the Record of Decision. The Forest Supervisor was responsive to public participation, and thoroughly responded to concerns that were identified during the scoping and comment periods.

The ARO recommended affirming the Forest Supervisor's decision on all issues, and denying the requested relief.

DECISION

I agree with the ARO's analysis as presented in her recommendation letter. Many of the issues raised in your appeal letter are similar to comments made during the comment period. All appeal issues raised have been considered. I affirm the Forest Supervisor's decision to implement Alternative 5. I deny all requested relief.

The project may be implemented on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of this letter (36 CFR 215.9(b)). My decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture [36 CFR 215.18(c)].

Sincerely,

/s/ Barnie T. Gyant
BARNIE T. GYANT
Deputy Regional Forester
Appeal Deciding Officer

Enclosure